

The New OEP (NAS to NGATS)

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The Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) has been the agency's chief capacity-enhancement document since 2001. This cross-agency plan currently contains some 150 operational milestones, progress towards which is monitored by a group of top executives including the Deputy Administrator, the ATO Chief Operating Officer, and key Associate Administrators. With the soon-to-be released Version 8, the OEP will contain all of the commitments needed to produce the 30 percent increase in effective capacity that the plan originally promised. This, in itself, is a great success story for the FAA.



While the OEP has focused on capacity gains over a rolling 10-year period, the multi-agency Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) has set its sights on the air transportation system's long-term transformation. The challenge has been to find a way to ensure that the agency's planning can realize JPDO's vision for the Next Generation Air Transportation System.

To meet this challenge, the FAA has decided to expand the OEP into the agency's "one plan" to provide continuity between what is and what is to come. Expanding its scope beyond capacity, the new OEP (no official name has yet been assigned) will harmonize existing plans and concepts, and like its predecessor, will provide a real and tangible foundation against which the agency and our partners can chart the future.

The development of this expanded OEP is ongoing. It will include key modernization programs that provide enablers for operational change, such as ERAM, SWIM and ADS-B.

It will introduce a more central role for the Office of Aviation Safety, with a new core section focused on aircraft and operator requirements. Importantly, the new OEP will align with the NAS and NGATS enterprise architectures.

The FAA has chosen to place its trust in the OEP because the plan has shown that it produces results. The OEP already has cross-agency and community support and has a proven monitoring process in place. The expanded OEP will grow to include strategic dates beyond the current OEP's 10-year timeframe; detailing the activities the agency must complete in order to

achieve the JPDO's NGATS.

The creation of this sort of plan comes at the urging of Congress and the aviation community. In its expanded form, the OEP will continue to be an invaluable tool for sharing with our customers how we are progressing on our commitments and what benefit will be derived from our efforts. Moreover, by participating on many association technical committees, including RTCA's Requirements and Planning Working Group, the OEP staff will continue to bring back to the agency valuable input on the aviation community's priorities.

The other agencies that, along with FAA, comprise the JPDO are looking to the expanded OEP as a model for their own internal implementation plans.

Version 8 of the current OEP, and information on the expanded version of the plan, will be available soon at www.faa.gov/programs/oep. ♦